



# Arizona Desert Digest

Bureau of Land Management

[www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)

Fall 2005 • Volume 2

## *Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership Receives* **National Recognition**

The BLM Tucson Field Office and its many partners recently received national recognition for their involvement in the highly successful Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership.

The Sonoita Valley partnership was one of 30 case studies highlighted during the three-day White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, which was held in St. Louis at the end of August. The Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency co-hosted the event, which arose from President George Bush's Executive Order signed last year titled "Facilitation of Conservation Cooperation."

The conference provided a forum for diverse groups of community and business leaders and federal, state, tribal and community government officials to exchange information and identify innovative approaches to promoting cooperative conservation that yield on-the-ground results.



Case studies at the conference highlighted some of the very best examples of cooperative conservation in the country, ranging from partnerships to protect cave habitats in Alabama to community-based sustainable wine grape growing in California.

The Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership was hailed as an outstanding example of a diverse partnership overcoming nearly insurmountable obstacles to find success in cooperative conservation.

"It is a tremendous honor for BLM Arizona and the Tucson Field Office for the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership to be highlighted at this conference," said BLM Arizona State Director Elaine Zielinski. "The partnership was selected from literally hundreds of submissions from throughout the country to showcase a highly successful on-the-ground cooperative conservation partnership – and to provide inspiration for others working to build successful partnerships."

.....

## From the State Director



In August of 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order promoting the principle of Cooperative Conservation and directing Federal agencies that oversee environmental and natural resource programs to use this principle in full partnership with states, local governments, tribes and individuals.

At BLM Arizona, we welcome this challenge. We know Cooperative Conservation works because we've been doing it well for a number of years. Several successful examples in Arizona were recently recognized as part of the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke came to Arizona in August to recognize the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership. And in late August of this year, Director

Clarke and representatives from the Tucson Field Office traveled to St. Louis to share the lessons BLM and its partners have learned from the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership.

This was quite an honor for the Partnership, the Tucson Field Office, and BLM Arizona. Their partnership was selected from among hundreds of submissions as an exceptional example of successful Cooperative Conservation.

They presented to a national audience of private, local, state, tribal and federal organizations and individuals involved in Cooperative Conservation. The lessons they discussed included:

Going beyond consultation – to full collaboration – opens the door to infinite possibilities for creative and sustainable solutions.

Organizing processes around issues often contributes to polarization, but processes focusing on desired results lead to increased consensus building.

Planning boundaries based on agency jurisdiction create boundaries that limit our own management flexibility and, ultimately, our success. Planning boundaries that blur jurisdiction lines and focus instead on

ecosystem resources allow us to fashion comprehensive solutions.

The traditional approach that analyzes conditions at a fixed point in time leads to more rigid planning documents. A view of resource conditions over time gives us flexibility for adaptive management that can respond to change.

And finally, public involvement is essential, not just in the planning stages, but throughout the process of implementing management plans and monitoring results.

Along with the Sonoita Valley, the BLM Bradshaw Foothills Collaborative Planning Partnership, and the Southwest Strategy were also showcased during the White House Conference (see related stories).

BLM Arizona is proud to be on the leading edge of this effort, helping to advance the principle of Cooperative Conservation for the good stewardship of our natural resources, for the benefit of present and future generations.

— Elaine Zielinski

.....

Representing the Sonoita Valley partnership at the conference were Jeff Williamson, CEO and executive director of the Phoenix Zoo; Mac Donaldson, Empire Ranch; Steve Saway, Arizona Resource Advisory Council member and President of Huachuca Hiking Club; Maeveen Behan, Assistant Pima County Administrator; Luther Propst, Executive Director of the Sonoran Institute; and Karen Simms, BLM's Community Planner for Las Cienegas NCA.

The Sonoita Partnership is an informal, voluntary association of public and private participants who share a common interest in the future of public land resources in the Sonoita Valley. It was formed in 1995, when the Tucson Field Office decided to take a new, collaborative approach to complete long-term land use planning needed to guide management of the 45,000 acres of public land in the valley – a unique, scenic area of rolling desert grasslands and woodlands in a high desert basin in southeastern Arizona.

The Partnership has brought together a broad and diverse collection of interests to define a common vision and core objectives that are focused on the long-term ecological health of the valley and watershed.

Among its many successes, the Partnership developed alternative management strategies to resolve issues and achieve desired conditions on public lands that are now within Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, and the Sonoita Valley Acquisition Planning District. The Partnership also played a key role in the BLM's Las Cienegas Resource Management Plan, which incorporates the Partnership's goals and objectives.

The Partnership continues to take an active role in the management of the Sonoita Valley and will be heavily involved in the implementation of Las Cienegas NCA management plan. It's currently working on organizing a state of knowledge workshop for the Cienega watershed, developing a comprehensive monitoring program for Las Cienegas, and planning for designated recreation sites on the Conservation Area, among other projects.

For more information about the Sonoita Valley Planning Partnership, log onto [http://www.sonoran.org/programs/sonoran\\_desert/si\\_sdep\\_sonoita.html](http://www.sonoran.org/programs/sonoran_desert/si_sdep_sonoita.html)

## Southwest Strategy Seeks Common Solutions

Since its establishment, the Southwest Strategy has strived for scientifically based, legally defensible and implementable results for public land management issues facing Arizona and New Mexico. Working together to build community support has paid big dividends. That's why the Southwest Strategy partnership was recently honored by being asked to provide a poster session and other materials for inclusion in the recent White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation in St. Louis, Mo.

The Southwest Strategy is a partnership that provides coordination for federal, state, local and tribal agencies to work together to restore and maintain the cultural, economic and environmental quality of life in Arizona and New Mexico. BLM Arizona has been involved with the Southwest Strategy since the partnership was formed in 1997.

Because the Southwest Strategy has been very effective in finding common solutions to issues surrounding ecosystem health, fire, water and the U.S./Mexico border, it is now

prepared to transition into a new collaborative role. The Southwest Strategy has redefined its mission to emphasize dialogue between agency leaders by exchanging information and maintaining working relations to solve resource and management issues in the Southwest.



Bureau of Land Management  
One North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
602-417-9504  
www.blm.gov

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
POSTAGE AND FEES PAID  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
PERMIT NO. G-76

## ARIZONA BLM DISTRICTS

Arizona Strip District  
(435) 688-3200  
Colorado River District  
(928) 505-1200  
Gila District  
(520) 439-6400  
Phoenix District  
(623) 580-5500

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# Citizen-driven Partnership Benefits the Bradshaw Foothills

The BLM Agua Fria National Monument and Bradshaw-Harquahala planning effort was also highlighted as a great example of community-based, multi-jurisdictional planning during the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. Hailed for its excellent citizen stewardship, this planning effort clearly attains one of the cooperative conservation goals to “go beyond consultation – to full collaboration.” The following profile outlines the key to its success.

Citizens are taking community planning to new heights in the Bradshaw Foothills Coalition. The citizen-initiated group works with BLM and other partners to plan and manage open spaces and public land recreation north of Phoenix.

As urbanization from Maricopa County encroached on the Bradshaw Foothills residents from the south, increasing traffic and trespass problems from off-highway vehicle users led the residents to form the partnership in May 2004. The group began meeting

with the Phoenix Field Office, Yavapai and Maricopa county sheriffs, Peoria police, Lake Pleasant Regional Park, Arizona Game & Fish, Arizona State Land and OHV representatives to develop solutions for the many safety concerns and to find ways to address law enforcement issues.

Together the partners are working to resolve the recreation and residents' conflicts, while preparing to implement land use planning. They are educating the OHV community on legal areas to park and unload their vehicles by placing boundary signs marking public and private lands. They have signed camping areas near trails to guide the OHV users. The group has also identified OHV areas for various skill levels, which allows inexperienced riders a chance to learn in a safer environment. Work continues today on problems affecting both residents and visitors to the area through monthly facilitated meetings and ongoing visitor “welcome” weekends, where members of the group greet visitors with information and maps.